

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 21269 01 OF 03 171905Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 H-01 NSC-05 /074 W
----- 047906 /46

P R 171844Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4168
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL HAMBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 21269

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GW
SUBJECT: THE NEW SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT GETS OFF TO A START
OF SORTS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 21269 01 OF 03 171905Z

REFS: (A) BONN 17024; (B) BONN 21122

SUMMARY: THE NEW SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT TAKES OFFICE AFTER
SOME MONTHS OF SUCH INTENSE GERMAN INTERNAL POLITICKING
THAT ALL PARTIES AND POLITICIANS ARE EXHAUSTED AND READY

FOR CALM AND PEACE. SCHMIDT'S GOVERNMENT DECLARATION, OF NUMBING LENGTH BUT FREE OF NEW DEPARTURES, REFLECTS THE CURRENT GERMAN WISH FOR PEACE AND STABILITY. BUT EVEN POLICIES OF CONTINUITY AND CONSOLIDATION CANNOT FORESTALL ALL POLITICAL DEBATE. THE GOVERNMENT, HOBBOLED BY A NARROW MAJORITY AND NAGGING INTERNAL DIFFERENCES, REMAINS ACCIDENT-PRONE EVEN THOUGH NO REPLACEMENT CAN YET BE REALISTICALLY ENVISIONED WITHOUT A GENERAL ELECTION. THOUGH THESE INTERNAL TENSIONS SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO CONCENTRATE HEAVILY ON ITS DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONCERNS. END SUMMARY

1. IT WOULD BE IDLE TO PRETEND THAT WE COULD PREDICT, WHEN WE WROTE TWO MONTHS AGO THAT GERMANY WOULD SEE "POLITICS AROUND THE CLOCK" (REF A), QUITE HOW LIVELY THE POLITICS WERE TO BE DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE GERMAN ELECTION AND THE OFFICIAL INSTALLATION OF SCHMIDT'S NEW CABINET. THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAVE SEEN STRAUSS' EFFORT TO BREAK A POLITICAL ALLIANCE THAT HAD LASTED A GENERATION, INTENSIVE AND OFTEN ACERBIC COALITION NEGOTIATIONS, AND A SCHMIDT MIS-CALCULATION THAT LEFT HIM AND HIS COALITION IN A STATE OF CONFUSION AND EXHAUSTION RIGHT UP TO HIS OWN NARROW REELECTION BY THE BUNDESTAG. EVERY GERMAN POLITICAL FIGURE WHOM WE HAVE MET THIS WEEK HAS EXPRESSED AN ARDENT DESIRE TO GO HOME FOR CHRISTMAS AND FORGET ABOUT POLITICAL LIFE UNTIL WELL AFTER THE NEW YEAR.

2. THE NEAR RUPTURE OF THE CDU/CSU PARLIAMENTARY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 21269 01 OF 03 171905Z

GROUP HAS BEEN EXTENSIVELY REPORTED BY MUNICH AND OURSELVES. THOUGH THE BREACH IS NOW HEALED, A RESIDUE OF MISTRUST AND BITTERNESS REMAINS. MANY POLITICAL FIGURES IN BONN, INCLUDING CSU REPRESENTATIVES, ASSERT THAT STRAUSS IS ONLY NURSING HIS WOUNDS AND WILL BE LOOKING FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO ASSERT HIS POWER AND TO DAMAGE KOHL. THE FEELING IN BONN IS THAT STRAUSS UNDERESTIMATED KOHL'S TOUGHNESS AND OVERESTIMATED THE SUPPORT THAT CSU MEMBERS WOULD GIVE HIM EVEN AT THE RISK OF THEIR OWN POLITICAL FUTURE. THEREFORE, KOHL LOOKS FROM HERE LIKE A SLIGHT WINNER. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH THE CONCESSIONS THAT KOHL MADE AT THE END MERELY CODIFIED POWER RELATIONSHIPS ALREADY EXISTING WITHIN THE JOINT FRAKTION, NOBODY KNOWS HOW STRAUSS MAY NOW USE THOSE. IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR CONFIDENCE TO RETURN TO THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP.

3. IF STRAUSS LOST SOMETHING IN HIS ATTEMPT TO BREAK

UP THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, SCHMIDT LOST EVEN MORE WHEN HE DECIDED TO POSTPONE THE PENSION INCREASE THAT HE HAD GUARANTEED DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HE SEVERELY DAMAGED HIS OWN IMAGE AS A "MACHER," A PRAGMATIST WHO ALWAYS CAREFULLY CALCULATED THE ODDS AND KNEW JUST WHEN AND WHERE TO STRIKE. ALL INDICATIONS HERE POINT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 21269 02 OF 03 171906Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 H-01 NSC-05 /074 W
----- 047920 /46

P R 171844Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4169
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL HAMBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 21269

TO GENUINE POPULAR OUTRAGE AT HIS DECISION, AS WELL AS
TO CONSTERNATION WITHIN THE PARTY. IT IS QUITE CLEAR
THAT THE BUNDESTAG WOULD NOT HAVE REELECTED SCHMIDT IF
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 21269 02 OF 03 171906Z

HE HAD NOT REVERSED HIS DECISION. IT IS EQUALLY CLEAR
THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN REELECTED IF IT HAD BEEN
KNOWN IN ADVANCE OF THE VOTE THAT AHRENDT, THE WIDELY
POPULAR MINISTER OF LABOR, WOULD BE MADE THE SACRIFICIAL
GOAT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S MISCALCULATION.

4. THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN DOMINATED BY A WISH
FOR STABILITY AND BY THE DESIRE TO FORGET THE PREVIOUS
WEEKS. THE TWO STRONGEST PERSONALITIES OF GERMAN
POLITICS GOT THEIR COME-UPPANCE. BOTH RETREATED BEFORE
THE WEIGHT OF THE OPPOSITION. BOTH GAINED PART OF WHAT
THEY HAD SOUGHT AT THE START, BUT THEY LOST MORE IN
SUPPORT FROM THEIR COLLEAGUES AND ESTEEM IN THE POPULA-
TION.

5. GIVEN THESE EVENTS AND THE TENACIOUS FDP OPPOSITION
TO ANY MEASURES THAT SMACK OF FURTHER SOCIAL WELFARE
PROGRAMS, IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT SCHMIDT'S PROGRAM
SPEECH STRESSED CONSERVATION AND CONSOLIDATION RATHER
THAN NEW DEPARTURES. AT THIS POINT IN GERMAN POLITICS,
MOST POLITICAL FIGURES ARE READY TO ACCEPT WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED BUT ARE NOT READY FOR NEW EXPENDITURES.
THEY WANT STABILITY, EVEN AT THE COST OF IMMOBILISM,
RATHER THAN ADVENTURISM. THIS DESIRE HAS ITS ROOTS IN
GERMAN HISTORY AS WELL AS IN A SOBER GERMAN APPRECIATION
THAT THEY HAVE WEATHERED RECENT STORMS BETTER THAN
OTHERS. IT ALSO HAS ROOTS IN THE SPREADING AWARENESS
THAT THE SOCIAL PROGRAMS SPAWNED DURING THE BRANDT YEARS
ARE COSTING A LOT OF MONEY, AND THAT OSTPOLITIK HAS NOT
ALTERED BASIC ALIGNMENTS OR ATTITUDES.

6. SCHMIDT'S SPEECH, AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, WAS
GREETED WITH LITTLE ENTHUSIASM EVEN IN HIS OWN PARTY.
NONETHELESS, IT MATCHES THE CURRENT GERMAN MOOD AND THE
REALITIES OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. GIVEN THE COMPOSI-
TION OF THE PRESENT COALITION AND THAT GERMAN MOOD, WE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 21269 02 OF 03 171906Z

SEE LITTLE PROSPECT FOR DRAMATIC DEPARTURES FROM THE
THEMES ENUNCIATED DURING THAT SPEECH.

7. SUCH A POLICY CANNOT BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT FRUSTRATION TO SOME. THE LEFT WING OF THE SPD, HUMBLER BY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 21269 03 OF 03 171913Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
ACDA-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 H-01 NSC-05 /074 W
----- 047986 /46

P R 171844Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4170
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINC USAF RAMSTEIN
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC EUR VAHINGEN
INFO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL HAMBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 21269

SCHMIDT'S ARROGANCE, BY HIS EARLY SUCCESSES, AND BY
THE REALIZATION THAT ONLY SCHMIDT COULD WIN THE ELECTION,
CANNOT REMAIN FOREVER SILENT AND INACTIVE. MANY ARE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 21269 03 OF 03 171913Z

ALREADY ASKING WHY THE FDP, WHICH WON LESS THAN 8 PER CENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE, SHOULD DICTATE THE POLICIES OF THE PARTY THAT WON MORE THAN 40 PER CENT. WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY THAT BRANDT AND BAHR WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY TRY TO REACTIVATE OSTPOLITIK AND THAT SCHMIDT PROBABLY HAS GIVEN THEM SOME LICENSE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES. BY THE SAME TOKEN, OTHERS WILL BE ASKING WHY THE GOVERNMENT OF A RICH COUNTRY CANNOT DO MORE FOR ITS OWN UNDERPRIVILEGED.

8. THE TENSION THAT THESE PRESSURES WILL PRODUCE WITHIN THE COALITION MEANS THAT THE CURRENT GERMAN GOVERNMENT, WHILE STABLE, REMAINS CURIOUSLY ACCIDENT-PRONE. THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE DEMONSTRATED, MORE DRAMATICALLY THAN ANYBODY MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED, THAT AN UNPREDICTABLE ELEMENT REMAINS IN GERMAN POLITICS. ANY ISSUE, FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC, COULD SUDDENLY BURST UPON THE SCENE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES THAT COULD PROVOKE A RIFT WITHIN THE COALITION. THEREFORE, WHILE IT IS NOW GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT SCHMIDT CAN GOVERN FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, FEW ARE READY TO EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE. AS IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, IT REMAINS VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT COMBINATION OF PARTIES IN THE BUNDESTAG COULD REPLACE THE PRESENT COALITION WITH A STABLE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY WITHOUT A NEW GENERAL ELECTION.

9. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE AMERICAN INTEREST IN A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, NOTHING HAS CHANGED ON THE SURFACE. ALL GERMAN PARTIES REMAIN COMMITTED TO CLOSE TIES WITH US. ALL REMAIN SOLIDLY COMMITTED TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND TO THE PRINCIPLES THAT IT DEFENDS. WHAT THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE SHOWN, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION MUST CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE A MAJOR SHARE OF THEIR ENERGY AND EFFORT ON DOMESTIC AFFAIRS AND ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY SITUATIONS,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 21269 03 OF 03 171913Z

AND THAT SUDDEN STORMS CAN HIT AT ANY MOMENT.
STOESSEL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, COALITION GOVERNMENT, FORM OF GOVERNMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BONN21269
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760465-0180
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761231/aaaabaet.tel
Line Count: 326
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BONN 17024, 76 BONN 21122
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by morefirh>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE NEW SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT GETS OFF TO A START OF SORTS CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PFOR, GE, (SCHMIDT, HELMUT)
To: STATE BERLIN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006